



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
June 30, 2015

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North Dakota Department of Health Adds Mobile Medical Unit to State Cache

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has acquired a Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) that will be used as a new and important tool to support patient care during public health emergencies. The MMU is available to respond to emergencies state-wide, and allows hospital or volunteer staff to accommodate eight to 16 emergency patients.

The NDDoH unveiled the MMU for the first time to the public on June 30 at the Capitol Building. Governor Jack Dalrymple was on the first tour led by Tim Wiedrich, chief of the NDDoH Emergency Preparedness and Response section. The section was instrumental in obtaining the MMU and is responsible for its maintenance, transportation and management as a part of the state's medical cache. "As a state health department, we are very pleased to add this MMU to our 'toolbox' that we use to respond to emergencies, and are thrilled to have the Governor on this first tour of the MMU in North Dakota," explained Wiedrich.

"I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to tour the new MMU for the first time today and I couldn't be more impressed," said Gov. Dalrymple. "This unit will be another important addition to our emergency response services and will allow us to better assist hospitals and communities in the event of a natural disaster."

The MMU was originally acquired by the Minnesota Department of Health with a grant from the federal department of Health and Human Services. When Minnesota decided not to retain the MMU, they asked for applications from eligible entities within the state and nearby state health departments and offered to transfer it within the region. North Dakota applied for and was awarded the MMU on the condition that NDDoH agreed to maintain the MMU in good condition and make it available for regional responses if it is not being used in North Dakota.

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The MMU can be requested and staffed by a hospital that finds itself in an emergency situation, or by local public health authorities and staffed with Medical Reserve Corps volunteers during a community-wide emergency. It does not compete with, but supplements local private health care providers during emergencies. NDDoH staff maintains the MMU and provides transportation to the emergency site. NDDoH staff also sets up and takes down the MMU with the help of local officials.

The NDDoH will bring the MMU to various locations around North Dakota before the end of 2015. During these visits, local public health officials will be trained how to set up, maintain, equip and take down the MMU.

For more information, contact Tim Wiedrich of the North Dakota Department of Health, 701.328.2270.

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Photo of MMU attached.